British vets warn against throwing sticks for dogs

January 20 2016

British vets on Wednesday warned against throwing sticks for dogs to chase, saying that thousands of pets every year impale themselves or get dangerous infections from biting into the wood.

"Our message is that these injuries are severe and are preventable simply by using dog-safe toys as alternatives to sticks," said Sean Wensley, president of the British Veterinary Association (BVA).

The warnings came after a report in The Times newspaper about a collie in Scotland named Maya, who suffered a punctured tongue and damaged larynx from getting a stick stuck in her throat.

"Stick injuries may not be initially obvious and may cause long-term problems," Sarah Stevenson of Bishopbriggs Veterinary Centre in Glasgow, which treated Maya, was quoted as saying.

"For these reasons, we are warning pet owners against throwing or encouraging their dog to play with or chase sticks," she added.

Grace Webster, president of the BVA in Scotland, echoed the concerns, telling The Times: "Throwing sticks for your dog can be dangerous."

Wensley said that, on average, one dog a month is treated for an injury from a piece of wood in each of the more than 5,000 veterinary practices in Britain.

"We see terrible penetrative wounds to the mouth, neck and sometimes the chest... These can be really serious, life-threatening injuries," he said.

The two main types of injuries are [dogs](#) impaling themselves on sticks as they run and dogs getting fragments of wood from chewed sticks into their mouth and throat, causing potentially fatal infections.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: British vets warn against throwing sticks for dogs (2016, January 20) retrieved 2 May 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2016-01-british-vets-dogs.html